

Regulating Candidates, Campaigns, and Lobbyists

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Surplus Campaign Funds

Surplus campaign funds -- those contributions given for an election that remain after the election and that are not needed to pay obligations from the election campaign -- may only be disposed of in one or more of the ways permitted by law. The options are:

- Returned to contributors, so long as the amount returned to a donor does not exceed the aggregate amount contributed. Refunds of contributions made by the candidate to his or her own campaign are subject to restriction. See Candidate Loan Repayments on the next page.
- Transferred without limit to a political party or legislative caucus committee;
- Held for use in a future campaign for election 1) to the same office last sought, or 2) to a different office, if the campaign obtains written permission from the contributors of the surplus to use their contributions to seek this different office.
- Transferred to the candidate's personal account as payment for earnings lost as a result of campaigning, so long as the lost earnings can be documented, the payment does not exceed what the candidate would have otherwise earned, and all payments are properly recorded and reported.
- Donated to a charitable organization registered as required by law with the Secretary of State's Office.
- Transmitted to the state treasurer for deposit in the general fund, the oral history, state library, and archives account under [RCW 43.07.380](#), or the legislative international trade account under [RCW 44.04.270](#), as specified by the candidate or political committee.
- Deposited into a separate Surplus Funds Account and then used to pay non-reimbursed public office related expenses* or for any of the six purposes outlined above.

RCW 42.17A.430. Disbursement of surplus funds is reported as an expenditure on Schedule A to the C-4 report.

These disposal options also apply to the disposal of items purchased by the campaign. When campaign assets are disposed of, attach an explanation to the C-4 report. (For example, if a left-over computer was donated to the county party central committee, the explanation would include the date, the name of the recipient, the item's description and its fair market value.) **WAC 390-16-221.**

* A "non-reimbursed public office-related expense" is an expenditure incurred by an elected or appointed official, or a member of his or her immediate family, solely because of being an official. **WAC 390-24-032.** If the official incurs a non-reimbursed public office-related expense that also, in any manner, could be considered personal in nature, PDC staff recommends paying the expenditure with personal funds, and then seeking reimbursement from a surplus funds account only for that specific portion that is directly related to his or her elected office.

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